CLAIMS

We claim:

1. In a vehicle comprising a first device and a second device and an active network communicatively coupling the first device and the second device for the communication of data between the first device and the second device, the active network being operable to encrypt the data.

2. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein each of the first device and the second device is coupled via an interface to the active network, and wherein each interface is operable to encrypt and decrypt the data.

3. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the active network comprises a plurality of active network elements coupled by connection media.

4. The vehicle of claim 3, wherein at least one of the plurality active network elements is operable to encrypt and decrypt the data.

5. The vehicle of claim 3, wherein at least one of active network elements comprises a switch.

6. The vehicle of claim 3, wherein at least one of active network elements comprises a bridge.

7. The vehicle of claim 3, wherein at least one of active network elements comprises a router.

8. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the active network is operable to determine an error in the data based upon the encryption of the data.

9. The vehicle of claim 1, wherein the data comprises data packets, and wherein the active network is operable to encrypt the data packets.

10. The vehicle of claim 9, wherein the data packets are individually encrypted.

11. A method of communicating data between a first device and a second device within a vehicle, the vehicle including an active network communicatively coupling the first device and the second device, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving data from the first device to be communicated to the second device via the active network;

encrypting the data at a first interface, the first interface coupling the first device to the active network,

communicating the data to a second interface, the second interface coupling the second device to the active network,

decrypting the data at the second interface; and

communicating the data to the second device.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the first interface and the second interface each comprise active network elements of the active network.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising detecting an error in the data at the second interface.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of detecting an error in the data comprises detecting an error in the data based upon the encryption.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the data comprise data packets, and wherein the step of encrypting the data comprises encrypting the data packets and wherein the step of decrypting the data comprises decrypting the data packets.